UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1994/585
17 May 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 17 MAY 1994 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF UGANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The Government of Uganda is once again outraged by the false and damaging accusations being levelled at it by the obviously tired and desperate Government of Rwanda. In particular, I refer to the statements made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda, Jerome Bicamumpaka, at the African Group Meeting of 12 May 1994 and more so to the statement made before the Security Council at its 3377th meeting, on 17 May 1994, on the question of Rwanda.

At both meetings, the Minister tried rather inadequately to draw the Republic of Uganda into the internal conflict pertaining to Rwanda, saying initially that Uganda was the territory from which the Rwandese refugees of the Rwandese Patriotic Front attacked in October 1990 and in the latter meeting that from 1962 to 1964 Rwanda had had to face a war that had been fomented by Uganda.

The inference made by stating that the Rwandese Patriotic Front, supported by Uganda, had taken responsibility for killing the Head of State of Rwanda, is a very grave accusation in so far as it implies that the Government of Uganda is in some way responsible for the death of President Juvenal Habyarimana. The Government of Uganda categorically denies any connection to any criminal act that may have led to the accident of 6 April 1994.

Uganda is not at war with Rwanda. The Government of Uganda has so far exercised and will continue to exercise maximum restraint towards the perpetrators of all these false allegations, which the Government regards as manoeuvres by the Government of Rwanda to distract international attention from its criminal actions against its civilian population and its failure to bring a halt to the immense suffering of the people of Rwanda. May I therefore use this opportunity to draw your attention to some overlooked facts of the Rwandese conflict.

The Government of Rwanda is quick to point out that the Rwandese Patriotic Front attacked its territory from Uganda, but never explains why or what Rwandese refugees were doing in Uganda in the first place. Uganda received Rwandese refugees as early as the first quarter of this century. First they were escaping harsh Belgian rule and later they were fleeing from ethnic

massacres similar to those being witnessed today. While in Uganda, these refugees took advantage of Uganda's civil wars to acquire skills, which they later used of their own volition, without any involvement of the Government of Uganda, to return to their motherland, a right which they had been denied for well over three decades.

The recent massacres in Rwanda are not new but a continuation of a trend that started early this century. Nor is this the first time that the United Nations is seized with similar matters in relation to Rwanda. As early as August 1952 a 90-year-old ex-chief, Bigiraneza, of Ruanda-Urundi, threatened to commit suicide if the Trusteeship Council failed to act on his complaints against Belgian administrators. The Belgian administration established after World War I was based on notions of racial hierarchy, upholding the Tutsi minority ethnic group over majority Hutu. The Hutu resentment of the status quo led to tribal clashes, and in 1959, when Bahutu ravaged the countryside, hundreds of Batusi tribesmen sought refuge in Uganda. Also in November 1959, a state of emergency was proclaimed in Rwanda. In December of that year, the Ugandan colonial administration "reluctantly" ordered 850 Batusi tribesmen to return home.

The next year, in April 1960, Belgium, in a move towards the independence of Rwanda, cut the power of the Batusi and increased that of Bahutu, leaving the minority at the mercy of a formerly oppressed majority.

In August 1960, shortly after the "Parmehutu" party won municipal elections, there were post-election riots and tribal wars leading to yet another exodus of refugees and bloodshed. This, in fact, led to General Assembly resolution 1579 (XV) of 20 December 1960, postponing the general elections.

General Assembly resolution 1746 (XVI) of 27 June 1962 granting Ruanda-Urundi independence as separate States of Rwanda and Burundi was followed by more ethnic tension and war in November of that year. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that 150,000 refugees had resettled in other African nations. They had fled Rwanda since the Bahutu tribe took over government control.

In February 1964, British missionaries in Rwanda charged that Bahutu tribesmen killed nearly 20,000 Batusi and warned that the Batusi tribe faced extermination. In the same month, Rwanda troops repulsed 3,000 Batusi attacking from the Congo (Zaire). The Government of Rwanda reportedly did not prevent the killing of the Batusi then. In March 1964, Vice-Premier Masumbuko of Burundi reported that 15,000 refugees had fled to his country. The United Nations itself was involved in airlifting refugees in the thousands from Zaire to Tanzania. In March 1963, armed Batusi were reportedly poised to invade Rwanda along the Burundi border, and the Embassy of the United States of America at Kigali evacuated employees, wives and children because of the threat of attack.

The slaughter and ethnic cleansing continued into the 1970s. On 5 July 1973, the Government of Rwanda was overthrown in a military coup led by Major General J. Habyarimana, a former Minister of Defence. Among the reasons cited for the overthrow of President G. Kayibanda was his Government's failure to solve tribal problems. The problems would continue.

The Batusi tribesmen continued to suffer at home even as the Rwandese refugees suffered in exile, and on 1 October 1990 they decided to take matters in their own hands and force the Government at Kigali to listen to their demands.

Therefore, both in terms of origin of the problem and its current manifestation, the Government of Uganda cannot in any way be linked to the suffering of the people of Rwanda. In fact, Uganda has continuously been a second home for Rwandese refugees fleeing their own administration. A notable fact is that even to date, media reports are of massacres in Government-held areas, showing a continuation of the trend outlined above.

None the less, war having started, in order to lift any suspicion that Uganda was in any way aiding the Rwandese Patriotic Front, the Government of Uganda agreed to have observers monitor the Uganda/Rwanda border. These borders were from the Government of Rwanda and the Organization of African Unity, and now there is a United Nations mission, the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR), doing the same job. UNOMUR has not reported any movement of troops or weapons from the Ugandan side of the border, yet this has not stopped the Government of Rwanda from making false accusations against Uganda.

In conclusion, the Government of Uganda welcomes Security Council resolution 918 (1994) of 17 May 1994, which imposes an arms embargo against Rwanda. The Government of Uganda will continue to support the work of UNOMUR and the Committee of the Security Council set up under resolution 918 (1994) to monitor the implementation of the embargo.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Anne MUGISHA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.